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FIVE-YEAR 9/11 REMEMBRANCE HONORS VICTIMS FROM 90 COUNTRIES

Nations united will win War on Terror, officials say

By Carolee Walker
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – Five years ago, evil swept into America's skies and onto American soil, said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at a ceremony at the U.S. Department of State on September 11, and the victims of the 2001 attacks in the United States by al-Qaida terrorists included people from around the world.

"In a violent instant, thousands of innocent souls were stolen from us," Rice said.

The attacks of September 11, 2001, were the worst assault on American land in the country's history and also attacked the universal ideals of peace, liberty and human rights, Rice said. More than 90 countries lost citizens in the attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, where a hijacked jet crashed into a field.

The State Department ceremony in Washington offered Rice, the diplomatic corps, State Department officials and foreign dignitaries, including former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the opportunity to reflect on the human losses experienced by the survivors of all nationalities. Rui Zheng, whose parents were passengers on the American Airlines flight that crashed into the Pentagon, and Floura Chowdhury,

whose cousins Nurul Miah and Shakila Yasmin were killed as they worked in the World Trade Center, read the names of the countries that lost citizens in the attacks.

In all, nearly 3,000 people were killed, including 60 police officers and 343 firefighters who responded to the scene in New York City.

During the morning rush hour on September 11, 2001, al-Qaida terrorists under the leadership of Osama bin Laden, who is still at-large, hijacked four passenger jets and flew them into the twin towers of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and into a field in Pennsylvania. United Airlines flight 11, en route from Boston to Los Angeles, crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center with 92 people aboard; American Airlines flight 77, from Washington to Los Angeles crashed into the Pentagon with 64 people aboard; United Airlines flight 175, from Boston to Los Angeles with 65 people aboard, was the second hijacked plane to strike the World Trade Center, plowing into the south tower; and United Airlines flight 93, from Newark, New Jersey, to San Francisco crashed in rural Shanksville, Pennsylvania, with 45 people aboard.

REMEMBRANCE AT THE PENTAGON

Marking the fifth anniversary of 9/11 at the Pentagon, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Peter Pace led families and dignitaries in remembering the 184 people who died at the Pentagon. “We hope in some way that this remembrance today and the ceremonies like it all over our country will tell you that we are with you; we will never forget.” (See related article.)

Now five years later, Pace said the number of U.S. military personnel who have died prosecuting the war against terrorism is approaching the number of people who were murdered, not only at the Pentagon, but also in New York and Pennsylvania.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld cited terror attacks elsewhere in the world. “Today we remember all of those who lost their lives, not only on September 11th,” he said, “but in the struggle we have faced against extremists now for more than two decades: the 241 Marines killed in Beirut [Lebanon]; the sailors on the USS Cole; the airline passengers flying over Lockerbie, Scotland; subway riders in Madrid [Spain] and London; the children going to school in Beslan, Russia.”

Rumsfeld said many of the terrorists who have not been killed or captured are on the run. “They have lost their sanctuary in Afghanistan,” he said, as well as the support of captured Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, who had been paying \$25,000 to the families of successful suicide bombers. But the remaining terrorists still try daily “to convince us to doubt our prospects, to distrust one another and to believe that the battle against them cannot be won or is not worth the costs,” the secretary said.

The greatest tribute that can be paid to those who went to work at the Pentagon September 11, 2001, and never went home again as well as to the 1.3 million Americans who have served in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Persian Gulf, said Rumsfeld, is to do “everything possible to fight the extremists wherever they are.”

Vice President Cheney, who joined Rumsfeld and Pace in paying tribute to lives lost, said September 11 “is a day of national unity.”

When the government shifted to a war footing five years ago, the U.S. mission was clear, Cheney said: “To defend America against a present danger and to offer a democracy and hope as the alternative to extremism and terror.”

FROM THE UNITED NATIONS

In New York City, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan called on U.N. member states to honor the 9/11 victims and victims of terrorism everywhere by taking swift action to implement all aspects of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on September 8.

“In this way,” Annan said, “they will demonstrate the international community’s unwavering determination to defeat terrorism.” The global terrorism strategy underlines the resolve of all governments to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, prevent and combat terrorism in all its forms, and strengthen the individual and collective capacity of states and the United Nations to do so – while ensuring the protection of human rights, Annan said.

The September 11 attacks “cut us all to the core, for they were an attack on humanity itself,” Annan said. All 191 members of the United Nations agreed at a World Summit in New York in 2005 on a condemnation of terrorism.

“The fight against terrorism is a fight for values and principles that are universal,” said Warren W. Tichenor, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva, Switzerland, in a ceremony there. “Much more unites us as citizens of the world than divides us. All major religions teach that life is precious, and that taking innocent life, including your own, is wrong,” Tichenor said after leading a moment of silence observed at 2:46 p.m. local time (8:46 a.m. Eastern Time), the hour at which American Airlines flight 11 struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center.

The fifth anniversary of 9/11 is a reminder of the shared challenge faced by an international community confronting terrorism, he said. “It has brought tragedy and terrible grief to innocent people across the world, from Indonesia to Morocco, Spain, Jordan, England, India and Egypt. Terrorists have shown no mercy for human life regardless of race, ethnicity or religion.”

A transcript of Rice’s remarks is available on the State Department Web site.
The full text of Rumsfeld’s prepared remarks is available on the Defense Department’s Web site.

The full text of Annan’s prepared remarks is available on the U.N. Web site, and the full text of Tichenor’s statement is available on the U.S. Mission to the U.N. in Geneva Web site.

WAR ON TERROR A STRUGGLE FOR CIVILIZATION, BUSH SAYS

President addresses Americans on a day of remembrance

By Michael Jay Friedman
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- In a nationally televised address commemorating the fifth anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, President Bush depicted the resulting conflict as “a war that will set the course for this new century” and a struggle “to maintain the way of life enjoyed by free nations.”

The Oval Office address concluded a day in which the president and senior officials participated in ceremonies at each of the three sites attacked by the 9/11 terrorists.

In New York City, the president and first lady Laura Bush attended a memorial ceremony held at the site of the former World Trade Center. Along with members of the New York City police and fire departments and thousands of others in attendance, Bush observed moments of silence at 8:46 a.m. and 9:03 a.m., the times when terrorist-piloted airliners struck each of the twin towers. While in New York, the president and first lady also attended an interfaith religious service and visited with firefighters.

The president and first lady then flew to Shanksville, Pennsylvania, where they observed a wreath-laying ceremony at the crash site of the hijacked United Airlines Flight 93.

The president later attended ceremonies at the Pentagon, also struck five years earlier by a hijacked passenger plane. Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld were among the speakers there. Americans marked the 9/11 anniversary at ceremonies held throughout the nation.

A STRUGGLE TO PRESERVE CIVILIZATION

In his address to the nation, the president depicted a decisive ideological struggle against a “global network of extremists driven by a perverted vision of Islam.” These extremists, he said, have murdered people of all colors, creeds and nationalities to advance their cause: “a radical Islamic empire where women are prisoners in their homes, men are beaten for missing prayer meetings, and terrorists have a safe haven to plan and launch attacks on America and other civilized nations.”

Bush expressed confidence that free peoples and those who yearn to be free would prevail in this “struggle for civilization,” and called the power of freedom one of the strongest weapons available to the United States and its allies. “The terrorists fear freedom as much as they do our firepower,” he said.

The president said that the United States and partner nations have taken the offensive and that the nation “now is safer, but we are not yet safe.” Bush numbered among the successes the defeat of Afghanistan’s Taliban regime and the death or capture of most of those who planned the 9/11 attacks, including the believed mastermind, Khalid Sheik Mohammed.

Even so, Bush said, “We face an enemy determined to bring death and suffering into our homes.... And we know that if they were able to get their hands on weapons of mass destruction, they would use them against us.”

Bush described Iraq as another crucial front in the ongoing contest. The president acknowledged that captured Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was not responsible for the events of September 11, 2001 but said that Iraq at that time posed a clear threat, and a risk that after 9/11 the world could no longer afford to take.

The effort to help the Iraqi people build a democracy remains crucial, Bush said. “Whatever mistakes have been made in Iraq, the worst mistake would be to think that if we pulled out, the terrorists would leave us alone. They will not leave us alone. They will follow us. The safety of America depends on the outcome of the battle in the streets of Baghdad.” The president lauded the ordinary Americans who responded to the 9/11 attacks, among them the New York firefighters who rushed into the burning towers of the World Trade Center, the passengers who charged the Flight 93 cockpit and seized control of the plane from the hijackers, and Pentagon staff. “The spirit of the American people is the source of America’s strength,” he said.

SUDAN URGED TO ACCEPT U.N. PEACEKEEPERS

United States call on Khartoum government to cooperate on helping Darfur

By Judy Aita
Washington File United Nations Correspondent

United Nations -- The United States called on Sudan September 11 to work with the U.N. Security Council to help the suffering people of Darfur.

William Brencick, U.S. minister counselor for political affairs, said that the United States will submit a draft of a presidential statement “to allow the council to speak for the international community with one strong clear voice and to say to the Government of National Unity: Work with us because the situation in Darfur cannot stand.”

The U.N. Security Council held its second meeting in 10 days on Sudan in an effort to resolve the impasse with senior Sudanese officials over the deployment of 20,000 U.N. peacekeepers to replace the overburdened African Union mission in the region. Senior Sudanese officials have not met with the council; Khartoum was represented at the meeting by the chargé of the government's U.N. mission.

The Security Council adopted Resolution 1706 on August 31 asking the secretary-general to arrange for the rapid deployment of the U.N. Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). But Sudan is opposing any U.N. involvement in Darfur peacekeeping and has threatened to expel the African Union troops at the end of September.

Brencick, questioned Sudan's claim to be open for talks with the United Nations.

The Sudanese chargé did not deliver Sudan's consent to the deployment of U.N. forces, he said.

"How many people need to describe the horror of the situation in Darfur or how much worse must the situation become before the Government of National Unity gets the message?" Brencick said. "Adoption of Resolution 1706 was a first step. The second and more crucial step is implementing it."

The U.S. representative said that the international community must support the African Union and its Darfur peacekeepers at this critical point.

"If the AU Peace and Security Council decides to extend AMIS through the end of the year, everyone, including the Government of National Unity, must do all we can to support it," he said. "This includes immediately implementing Resolution 1706, which provides for robust assistance to AMIS."

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said that the situation in Darfur is critical. It is a crucial test of the council's authority and effectiveness, its solidarity with people in need and its seriousness in the quest for peace.

For two years, the Security Council has worked to stem the fighting and improve the situation, "yet once again we find ourselves on the brink of a new calamity," he said. "I urge you, I urge you in the strongest possible terms, to rise to the occasion."

The secretary-general also called on the governments and individual leaders in Africa and elsewhere to press Sudan to consent to the transition to a U.N. peacekeeping mission.

Annan discussed the reports of renewed fighting among the various factions in north Darfur, fighting that not only violates the peace agreement but is bringing "even greater misery to a population that has already endured far too much."

The fighting has made it difficult for humanitarian workers to provide aid and the workers themselves are becoming targets of brutal violence and physical harassment, he said. Twelve aid workers have lost their lives in the last two months, more than in the previous two years.

"Unless security improves, we face the prospect of having to drastically curtail an acutely needed humanitarian operation," Annan said. "Can we, in conscience, leave the people of Darfur to such a fate? Can the international community, having not done enough for the people of Rwanda in their time of need, just watch as this tragedy deepens?"

Recalling the U.N. General Assembly's acceptance of the principle of the international community's responsibility to protect civilians suffering violence and human rights abuses, Annan said, "Lessons are either learned or not; principles are either upheld or scorned."

"This is no time for the middle ground of half-measures or further debate," the secretary-general said.

U.S. OFFICIAL SAYS NORTH AMERICAN TRADE PACT AIDS ALL SIGNATORIES

USTR's Melle says United States, Canada, Mexico are better customers, partners

Washington -- Twelve years after implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) began, the United States, Canada and Mexico have become better customers for each other's goods and services, and also more effective trading partners, says Deputy Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for North America John Melle.

In a September 11 statement before a Senate Finance Committee hearing, Melle said that after the first 12 years of NAFTA, the three signatory countries are more prosperous and better prepared to tackle any hurdles.

Melle said that since NAFTA's entry into force on January 1, 1994, total U.S. trade of goods between the North American nations has more than doubled from pre-NAFTA levels, with Mexico surpassing Japan as the United States' second-largest trading partner behind only Canada. The USTR official said that as a comprehensive agreement, NAFTA not only covers trade in goods, but also government procurement, intellectual property rights, standards and dispute settlement, as well as services and investment, thereby creating a secure and predictable environment that has facilitated increased investment in each of the NAFTA partners.

"The NAFTA partners are investing more in each others' economies, and the rest of the world is also investing more in our economies," Melle said.

Even though the NAFTA contribution to each nation's broader economic performance cannot be measured precisely, Melle told legislators that Mexico's gross domestic product (GDP) has grown 40 percent since 1993 and Canada's real GDP expanded nearly 50 percent during this period. In addition to these economic successes, Melle said that NAFTA remains a vibrant agreement in part because it has responded to changes in production methods and sourcing methods.

Melle explained that since 1994, the NAFTA partners have accelerated elimination of tariffs four times, with a total value of trilateral trade covered by these rounds of tariff cuts of approximately \$28 billion. The USTR official said the NAFTA partners also have implemented three sets of changes to the NAFTA rules of origin, with a total value of trade covered by these changes of more than \$39 billion. Apart from these changes, he said, the United States, Mexico and Canada have resolved a number of thorny trade disputes in 2006. Recent successes in this area include the conclusion of a bilateral agreement on tequila between the United States and Mexico, a separate agreement between the two nations on cement and sweeteners, and final agreement between the United States and Canada to resolve a softwood lumber dispute that had dogged trade relations for almost 20 years.

Looking ahead, Melle said there still are NAFTA commitments that must be implemented. Although all tariff cuts between the United States and Canada have been implemented, the remaining tariff reductions between the United States and Mexico will be made January 1, 2008. Although less than 1 percent of U.S. NAFTA trade with Mexico will be affected, the final removal of these tariffs has raised concerns. Nonetheless, Melle said that NAFTA trade ministers reaffirmed in March their commitment to the full implementation of NAFTA. Other challenges the NAFTA partners must confront include the changes in global trade since NAFTA entered into force. Melle said that all the NAFTA partners have concluded other trade agreements since 1994 and face increased competition in each other's markets as well as with the economies of such countries as China and India.

The NAFTA partners must consider how to address increased security concerns without creating trade barriers, Melle said. This is the fundamental challenge of the Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, the USTR official said. "With the NAFTA firmly in place, the United States and its NAFTA partners have not only become better customers for each other but better neighbors, more committed partners, and effective colleagues in a wide range of trade-related international organizations," he said.

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